

## CHAPTER IX

### CONSTANTINO AND THE DONATISTS

IF Constantino hoped that by the Edict of Milan he had stilled the voice of religious controversy, he was speedily disillusioned, he was now to find the peace of the Church violently disturbed by those belonging to her communions, and the hatreds of Christians against one another almost as menacing to the tranquillity of the imperial rule as had been the bitter strife of pagan and Christian. In the same year (313) he received an appeal from certain African bishops imploring him to appoint a commission of Galilean bishops to settle certain difficulties which had arisen in Africa, The 1st Donatist schism, which was destined to last for more than a century, had begun. Its rise may be traced in a few words. Northern Africa had long been the home of a morbid religious fanaticism. Montanism and Novatianism had found there their most violent adherents, to whom there was something peculiarly attractive in extravagant protest against the laxity or the liberalism of the Church elsewhere, and in emphatic insistence on the narrowness of the way which leads to salvation. Those who set up the most impossible standard of